

VZCZCXRO4161
OO RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #0265/01 1031244
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131244Z APR 07
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8754
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8580
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 0280
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ PRIORITY 0260
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0259
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO PRIORITY 0256
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000265

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DS/IP/AF, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/OSAC
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON
DOE FOR GPERSON, CAROLYN GAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR FLISER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2017

TAGS: [NI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN GOVERNORS SEE LITTLE INEC PREPARATIONS

REF: LAGOS 162

LAGOS 00000265 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary: In recent separate conversations with the Consul General, Governors of Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Imo criticized the lack of electoral preparation in their states just 10 days before the gubernatorial elections. While the People's Democratic Party (PDP) will likely carry these states in the gubernatorial and presidential contests, this trio of governors is not enamored with their party, its internal selection process, nor with its head, President Obasanjo. The governors were decidedly more interested in making sure the right person succeeded them than in ensuring that PDP presidential candidate Yar'Adua wins their state. Thus, although Yar'Adua may carry these states, his margin may not be as significant as was Obasanjo's in 2003. End Summary.

Poor Election Planning Mystifies Governors

12. (C) During early April travels through southern Nigeria, the governors of Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Imo told the Consul General the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had not contacted them for logistical help as it had previously. None of the governors were sanguine about INEC

preparations. Not one believed that, with the brief time remaining, INEC could get its logistical house in order.

13. (C) Governor Achike Udenwa of Imo State said he did not feel his usual "pre-election anticipation" and Governor Victor Attah of Akwa Ibom described the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and INEC as resembling a poorly run movie theatre which has left the Nigerian audience wondering when the image, whatever it may be, would come into focus. Attah departed a recent Federal Executive meeting in Abuja with more questions than he had arriving, particularly on hiring and training staff and the preparedness of election-related materials. Governor Donald Duke of Cross River scoffed at INEC's announcement to place candidates' pictures on the ballots because it would create a logistical nightmare for printing and properly distributing materials. Duke added that up to that moment he had had no contact with any INEC official in the state and was unaware of INEC preparations. In contrast, Duke stated that he worked closely with INEC in 2003 to give support such as vehicles, phones, etc.

Presidential Election: What If

14. (C) All three speculated that a delay of the presidential elections was possible. No one had a clear idea of what would subsequently transpire should the delay materialize. All disregarded the idea of an interim government as extra-constitutional and something to be avoided. Attah commented if no successive President were elected April 21 "things will get ugly." Unfortunately, Attah feared Obasanjo might be hell-bent on pursuing some option that would keep him in office after May 29. Each of the three governors had little nice to say about the President's handling of electoral matters. Each of the three was also told by the

LAGOS 00000265 002.2 OF 003

President to stand aside for Yar'Adua--thus they also have quite personal reasons to grouse.

PDP Strong in South-South & South-East; South-West Wildcard

15. (C) Duke estimated sixty percent of northern Nigeria supported Muhammadu Buhari of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) while the PDP's stronghold would be the south. Buhari has not campaigned in southern Nigeria and does not have sufficient strength or structure to make a dent in the south.

Allowing Vice President Atiku Abubakar to run for the presidency under the Action Congress (AC) would strengthen the PDP's claim to victory as the north, the PDP's weakest region, would be further split among three major candidates, Duke reasoned. He described Obasanjo's decision to prohibit Atiku from running for the presidency as emotional, not strategically sound.

16. (C) According to these governors, the PDP should win the south-south states in the presidential race and all but Edo in the governorship race. Our interlocutors agreed Edo could go to former National Labor Congress President Adams Oshiomole, the AC candidate. Attah cautioned that ethnic Ijaws' objections to the PDP gubernatorial candidate in Delta and a split within the Rivers PDP over the announcement of Celestine Omehia instead of the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Rotimi Amaechi, as the party's governorship candidate could possibly weaken the party's hold on these two states. Attah warned electoral violence would occur in many places in the South-South, particularly Rivers State.

17. (C) Neighboring Imo State in the south-east was no better off, Attah said, because INEC and the state each announced different candidates as the PDP gubernatorial nominee. Duke commented Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos in the south-west were wild cards in the governorship race, but expected the PDP to win

all three southern zones in the presidential race. Similarly, Attah and Udenwa commented Lagos should go to the Action Congress, not the PDP.

Duke Warned to Lay Low by ANPP; Done with Politics

18. (C) A top official from the ANPP recently visited Duke. The ANPP official was confident the ANPP could do well in Rivers in the presidential election provided a level playing field existed. The official entreated Duke not to allow the PDP to rig too brazenly in the state. Duke said many disenchanted PDP members defected to the AC after the party primaries. Duke asserted that many governors, although nominally still in the PDP, had their hearts elsewhere, implying the AC. He foresaw a situation where these governors would work assiduously so their allies would win the gubernatorial races under the PDP. However, the effort of these same governors would be noticeably more languid come time to support the Obasanjo-annointed PDP presidential candidate.

19. (C) When Duke told the President of his desire for the PDP presidential nomination, Obasanjo withheld his endorsement, instead cryptically mentioning "there are things I would like to tell you but cannot." In hindsight, Duke

LAGOS 00000265 003.2 OF 003

interpreted this comment to mean Obasanjo already had developed his plan of action before the National PDP Convention. Duke said he pursued the presidential ticket "to soothe his own curiosity," but was disappointed Obasanjo did not support him and was more than upset that Obasanjo forced him from the race at the eleventh hour. Claiming he was tired and had nothing more to offer Cross River as governor, Duke said he had hinted to the PDP he was not interested in a ministerial or federal position under the new administration.

110. (C) Duke also recounted Governor Peter Odili of Rivers State had expected Obasanjo's support for the presidency to the extent that he had purchased 80 buses and several aircraft for his national campaign. However, when it became clear he would not be Obasanjo's successor, Odili backed down and subsequently donated his campaign assets to others, but mostly the presidential campaign. Duke said Odili gave 3 buses to Liyel Imoke, the PDP's governorship candidate in Cross River state, who faces virtually zero opposition.

Attah Criticizes the PDP; Identifies Weakness

111. (C) Governor Victor Attah of Akwa Ibom, like Duke, was forced to drop from the PDP presidential nomination contest. Attah told the Consul General the PDP had not helped promote democracy and had become an impediment to democratization, thus the upcoming elections would be more farce than fair.

112. (C) Continuing his diatribe against the Obasanjo-dominated PDP, Attah said that he enjoyed being governor, but did not enjoy being a governor under President Obasanjo. Like Duke, Attah said he was not interested in a ministerial position. However, he would be amenable to serving on an ad-hoc basis or involving economic development. He claimed to have a good working relationship with Yar'Adua.

Comment

113. (C) Attah, Duke, and Udenwa expressed similar concerns about the elections: INEC appeared unprepared and slow at getting ready. None of the three are fans of President Obasanjo so their comments have to be seen in this light.

However, their remarks are representative of a significant segment of the PDP. Many figures are disenchanted by how the party conducted the primaries. They remain in the party so as not to incur the President's wrath for having defected. However, they would feel no hesitation to undermine the President's plans to extend in office or swing the presidential election to Yar'Adua if they can do so by subterfuge or indirection. End Comment.

BROWNE